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ALL
RECORD
REVIEWS



Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone

{ RECORD REVIEWERS: Tom G.

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VALE MAESTRO

VERDI AND TOSCANINI: *Nabucco*—*Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves* (with Westminster Choir); *I Lombardi*—Act 3, *Trio*; (with Vivian Della Chiesa, Nicola Moscana, Jan Peerce); *I Vespri Siciliani*—Overture; *La Forza Del Destino*—Overture; *Luisa Miller*—Overture and *Quando le sere al placido* (with Jan Peerce); *Rigoletto*—Act 4 (with Leonard Warren, Zinka Milanov, Jan Peerce, Nan Merriman, Nicola Moscana); *Otello*—*Ballabili* (Act 3); *Hymn of the Nations* (with Jan Peerce and Westminster Choir). NBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Arturo Toscanini. RCA Victor set LM-6041, 2 discs, \$7.96.

▲IT was a wonderful idea of Victor to assemble an album of Verdi excerpts from the broadcasts of Toscanini. The reproduction in these various selections, made at various times (the earliest in 1942; the latest in 1952), is unusually fine. The historical importance of this album is of the utmost importance now that the one and only Arturo Toscanini has joined the spirit of his favorite Italian composer—Giuseppe Verdi. Toscanini knew Verdi and respected his tempi markings. In an essay on Toscanini and Verdi, Marcia Davenport tells an interesting incident on this. Perhaps the most important part of this album is the final act of *Rigoletto*, enlisting the services of a dramatic soprano for Gilda. The writer, shortly after the Maestro presented this act in a Red Cross Concert in 1944, questioned him on the use of a dramatic soprano. "For the last act, the dramatic soprano is best," he answered with the implication of a irremovable period at the end of his statement. It will be noted that the Maestro did not permit liberties of interpolated high tones by any of the singers—to him, it was sacrilege to add to Verdi. As always with him, the orchestra is a vital and commanding protagonist and assuredly an inspiration to the singers, who are all in fine voice. It is interesting to hear the Maestro's performance of the trio finale of Act 3 from *I Lombardi* which is a long scene with a curiously lengthy violin solo at the beginning. Verdi's *Hymn of the Nations* is a *pièce d'occasion* which Toscanini revived during the war for a propaganda film. The interpolation of the *Internationale* and *The Star-Spangled Banner* at the end is understandable. The Maestro had a flair for the dramatic, and this rousing performance was for an all-around just cause. Besides the authoritative performances of three of Verdi's operatic overtures, Toscanini performs some dances—unfamiliar to most of us—written for the first French production of *Otello*. One can hardly imagine a

Toscanini enthusiast not adding this album to his record library. —P.H.R.

OPERA SPOTLIGHT

ALBANESE SINGS PUCCINI with the RCA Victor Orchestra conducted by Jonel Perlea and Victor Trucco, the Rome Opera House Orchestra conducted by Jonel Perlea and Vincenzo Bellezza. *Tosca*—*Vissi d'arte*; *Turandot*—*Signora ascolta* and *Tu che di gel sei cinta*; *Le Villi*—*Se come voi piccina io fossi, o vaghi fior*; *La Rondine*—*Chi il bel sogno di Doretta* and *Ore dolci e divine*; *La Bohème*—*Mi chiamano Mimi* and *Musetta's Waltz*; *Manon Lescaut*—*In quelle trine morbide*; *Suor Angelica*—*Senza mamma bimbo tu sei morto*; *Madama Butterfly*—*Ancora un passo or via, Un bel di, vedremo*, and *Morte di Butterfly*. RCA Victor LM-2033, \$3.98.

▲SINCE she joined the Metropolitan Opera roster, making her debut as *Butterfly* in the 1939-40 season, Licia Albanese has been closely linked with the operas of Puccini. It was apparent from the beginning that the soprano's technical skill was considerable, as well her artistic sensitivity. The voice has a truly appealing quality which offsets its limitations for, in developing a sizable tone to fill the acoustical deadness of the Metropolitan, the soprano did so to the sacrifice of tonal modulation. But Licia Albanese is one of those rare artists who can most convincingly identify themselves with any role they essay. Only once in this program does the soprano seem out of character, and that is when she sings *Musetta's Waltz*. No Albanese enthusiast, and I count myself as one of these, will want to miss this record, even if they buy the *Butterfly* disc or the complete *Manon Lescaut* from which the four selections

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included here were derived. Splendid reproduction throughout, with the level of sound a notch above the other arias in the excerpts from *Butterfly*. Bravo, Signora Albanese! —P.H.R.

BOITO: *Mefistofele*; Boris Christoff (*Mefistofele*), Giacinto Prandelli (*Faust*), Orietta Moscucci (*Margherita*), Amalia Pini (*Martha*), Piero de Palma (*Wagner*), Orchestra and Chorus of the (Rome) Opera House conducted by Vittorio Gui. RCA Victor Set LM-6109, 2 discs, \$7.96.

▲BOITO'S operatic masterpiece (so regarded in Italy) has had only two recordings—one dating back a quarter of a century, with Nazareno de Angelis as *Mefistofele*, and the other a recent issue by Urania with Giulio Neri in the title role. While de Angelis was a great basso in his day, he was definitely past his prime when he participated in that early Columbia recording. Christoff has the personality, which Neri lacks, to make his performance of *Mefistofele* a most impressive one, recalling at many points the late Chaliapin. Christoff's voice in the theater is not as large as Chaliapin's, but with the aid of modern recording techniques it is most impressive in size, definitely a more living presence than those of the other artists. Prandelli is in some ways a better *Faust* than his predecessors, but on the whole his characterization lacks vitality. Moscucci has a fresh, youthful voice and she makes an appealing *Margherita*. The best of this opera lies in the Prologue; the next best in the Death Scene of *Margherita*. This production is a cut version of the opera, the editing having been made by the conductor, Vittorio Gui. His omission of the Grecian scene (Act 4) hardly can be missed since it is the weakest part of Boito's score. The Rome Chorus and Orchestra, under the efficient direction of Gui, acquit themselves honorably, and Victor engineers show us once again that the Rome Opera House is one of the most nearly ideal auditoriums in which to realize "living" presence in an opera recording. —P.H.R.

CHARPENTIER: *Louise*; Berthe Montmart (Louise); Andre Laroze (Julien); Solange Michel (La Mère); Luis Musy (La Père); Andrea Guiot (Irma), and others, with Opéra-Comique Chorus and Orchestra, conducted by Jean Fournet. Epic set SC-6018, 3 discs, \$14.94.

▲THIS was awarded the *Grand Prix du Disque* in France, but with all due respects to its good qualities I am not sure it quite rates that distinction. To be sure a complete *Louise* was overdue (the one previous recording made many years ago was abridged) and certainly this one seems to meet current standards of performance in Paris. But it is a competent rather than

a distinguished production. None of the principals measures up to those great artists in the shortened version—Ninon Vallin, Georges Thill, and André Pernet. Monmart is a pleasing singer rather than a subtle one; Laroze is powerful rather than poetic. The best of the cast is Musy, but even he does not give us a great characterization. Solange Michel works too hard to make the Mother the harridan she should be, and her singing is not so smooth as one could wish. More atmosphere could have been gotten into the wonderful street cries. In a word, when a set is as good as this one wishes it were better.

—P.L.M.

MOZART: *Die Entfuehrung aus dem Serail*; Lois Marshall (Constanze); Ilse Hollweg (Blonde); Leopold Simoneau (Belmonte); Gerhard Unger (Pedrillo); Gottlob Frick (Osmin); Hansgeorg Laubenthal (Pasha Selim); *Dialogue*: Hilde Volk (Constanze); Ilse Hollweg (Blonde); Manfred Schmidt (Belmonte); Gerhard Unger (Pedrillo); Fritz Hoppe (Osmin); Beecham Choral Society and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. Angel 3555, 2 discs, \$9.96.

▲BEECHAM, in an introductory note, reminds us of his forty-seven year acquaintance with the score, and his more than 200 performances. Characteristically, he explains but does not apologize for, some changes he has made in the order of the numbers. Most important is the transplanting of *Martnen aller Arten* well along into the second act, which he justifies by the stage action, hardly a very valid reason in a recording. As usual the tenor aria, *Ich baeu ganz auf diene Staecke*, is omitted, Sir Thomas putting himself on record as considering it inferior Mozart. Such musicological considerations aside, the conductor gives his own kind of a light and lyrical performance, and brings out many happy details of the score. Somehow, however, the singers don't seem to match his spirit. This applies least to Simoneau, certainly the most lyrical of recorded Belmontes, for he is able to give weight to the words he sings, though he doesn't quite make us believe he is a real German. Frick is a vocally superb Osmin, more gifted than Decca's Greindl, though less in character. Koreh, the weak spot in the London set, hardly counts in this comparison. Both Marshall and Hollweg, with their quite lovely voices, sing with rather too much care, Marshall especially using the quiet, "confidential" style one hears so much nowadays. This is hardly the way to deal with such an outburst as *Martnen aller Arten*. For a balance of tone and drama, the honors go to Stader in the Decca set, though London's Lipp is more sheerly exciting. To sum up, though one hates to lose some of the detail in Krips' performance (London) and though Beecham's has its own charm, the

best choice of the three is Fricsay (Decca) whose singers have both vocal charm and a sense of the theater.

—P.L.M.

JAN PEERCE IN OPERA—*Don Giovanni*—*Dalla sua pace* and *Il mio tesoro* (Mozart); *Rigoletto*—*La donna è mobile*; *La Forza del Destino*—*O tu che in seno agli angeli* (Verdi); *Carmen*—*Flower Song* (Bizet); *La Juive*—*Rachel!* *Quand du Seigneur* (Halevy); *L'Arlesiana*—*Lamento de Frederico* (Cilea); *Un Ballo in Maschera*—*Recit.* and *Aria*; *Ma se m'e forza perderti* (Verdi); *Cavalleria Rusticana*—*Addio alla Madre* (Mascagni); *Lucia di Lammermoor*—*Tomb Scene* with Ezio Pinza. RCA Victor, NBC Symphony and Metropolitan Opera Orchestras conducted by Erich Leinsdorf, Jonel Perlea, Dimitri Mitropoulos and Renato Cellini. RCA Victor LM-2055, \$3.98.

▲PEERCE is one of those rare operatic tenors who shun excessive liberties. His integrity as a musician prompted Toscanini to engage him some fourteen times in performances from Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* to leading operatic roles. It has been said that Peerce was the Maestro's favorite tenor in this country. Peerce knows dramatic values as well as musical ones, and the manner in which he contrives to balance these values is assuredly the work of a first-rate artist. This operatic recital finds him completely at home in every role from which the various arias are chosen. His singing of the two *Don Giovanni* arias are accomplished with befitting artistry and manliness. Like the late John McCormack, he sings the long middle cadenza in *Il mio tesoro* with one breath. Hearing Peerce sing the aria from *La Juive* recalls Caruso. As one who admired Peerce's former recording of the final scene from *Lucia*, the writer is pleased to find that this later recording—with Pinza—was arranged. It is among the best things that Peerce has done for the phonograph, even though it is pitched slightly higher than it should have been. But, let it be said, there is not a disappointing selection on this disc. The student tenor would do well to use Jan Peerce as a guide to true tenor artistry. First-rate reproduction throughout.

—P.H.R.

PERGOLESI: *Il Maestro di Musica*; Elisabeth Soederstrom (Loretta); Karin Sellergren (Dorina); Arne Ohlson (Lamberto); Carl-Axel Hallgren (Colagianni) and Drottningholm Theater Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Lamberto Gardelli. Westminster XWN-18262, \$3.98.

▲AS the accompanying notes frankly state, *Il Maestro di Musica* is pretty well established as a spurious work of Pergolesi, though some of the arias seem to be his. This performance is the third on records,

but the first in the original Italian. It is also the first to use the recitatives, for the two English performances were done with spoken dialogue. Though all things considered this is easily the best of the three; it is by no means definitive, for the capable and well-intentioned Swedish singers lack the vital spark to carry them in the Italian language. The glow of true humor evades them. The orchestra plays well, and the conductor's conception of the score is smooth and graceful. But the performance just isn't Italian.

—P.L.M.

Famous Operatic Arias: *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*—*Una voce poco fa* (Rossini); *Lucia*—*Il dolce Suono*; *Spargi d'amore piano* (Donizetti) (with Vincenzo Preziosa, basso, and Andrea Mineo, baritone); *Rigoletto*—*Tutte le feste al tempio* (Verdi); *Fra Diavolo*—*Or son sola* (Auber); *Rigoletto*—*Caro nome* (Verdi); *Lakmé*—*Ou va la jeune hindoue?* (Delibes); *Don Pasquale*—*Quel guardo il cavaliere* (Donizetti); Roberta Peters (soprano) with Rome Opera House Orchestra conducted by Vincenzo Belleggia and Jonel Perlea. RCA Victor LM-2031, \$3.98.

▲MISS Peters' voice has human warmth in it, and she has uncommon facility and a sense of the coloratura style. Her *legato* singing is the more appealing for the fact that she does not hurry it, but lets her tones carry their full weight. She has, too, a sense of comedy, which stands her in good stead in the *Barbiere* and *Don Pasquale* arias. Occasionally she disappoints by producing the kind of vibrant high tones that twinkle when they should shine steadily. This is her major fault, and seemingly a quite unnecessary one in so generally accomplished a singer. The program is presented with great aplomb and it is mostly pleasing, though in the *Bell Song* it seemed to me that the young lady was trying to dazzle with rapid singing when I would rather have had a steadier, more solid tempo. The voice is very well reproduced.

—P.L.M.

PUCCINI: *Il Tabarro*; Tito Gobbi (Michele), Margaret Mas (Giorgetta), Giacinto Prandelli (Luigi), Piero de Palma (Tinca), Plinio Clabassi (Talpa), Miriam Pirazzini (Frugola), Renato Ercolani (Song Peddler), Piero de Palma and Sylvia Bertona (Two Lovers), Orchestra and Chorus of the Rome Opera House conducted by Vincenzo Bellezza. RCA Victor LM-2057, \$3.98.

▲ALL of six years ago Cetra brought out a recording of Puccini's *Il Tabarro*, an opera that remains underestimated. In its way, it is a masterpiece of dramatic intensity. The action, as most opera enthusiasts know, takes place on a barge anchored in the Seine River with Paris in the background. Puccini's uses his orchestra ingeniously throughout, often

employing a rhythmical surge behind the voices that suggests the never ending flow of the river. The atmosphere of the scene is conveyed in the first half of the score, but later the orchestra becomes a dramatic undertow that relentlessly builds to the climax when Michele catches his wife's lover and kills him. Comparing this performance with the previous one issued by Cetra, one realizes its realistic reproduction is completely in its favor and yet it does not quite satisfy in the way that the Cetra performance did, for the singers are not as convincing. Gobbi overplays the sinister character of Michele and sings with dry tonal quality throughout. Reali was vocally more effective and so, too, was Clara Petrella as the wife, Giorgetta. Here, Prandelli gives a better account of the lover, Luigi, than did Glauco Scarlini. Margaret Mas, a singer best known in France, is most competent and vocally often thrilling but Petrella is the more compelling singing actress. The sound of the Puccini orchestra being best served in the Victor set (the Cetra is really a bit depressing by comparison) most listeners undoubtedly will be inclined toward the new issue. —P.H.R.

THE ART OF ELISABETH RETHBERG—*Othello*—*Salce, salce* and *Ave Maria* (Verdi); *Der fliegende Hollaender*—*Traft ihr das Schiff* (Wagner); *Die Fledermaus*—*Czardas* (Strauss); *Il Restore*—*L'Amoro saro costante* (Mozart); *Faust*—*Le Roi de Thule* (Gounod); *Boccaccio*—*Hab' ich nur deine Liebe* (Suppe); *Il Ballo in Maschera*—*Maddal' arido stella* and *Morro ma prima in grazia*. Camden CAL 335, \$1.98.

▲MUSICALLY and interpretatively, Elisabeth Rethberg was one of the most satisfying artists at the Metropolitan Opera during the 20 years she was there—November 22, 1922 to March 6, 1942. Hers was a notable career at that famous citadel of operatic endeavor. Blessed with an ingratiating voice, well controlled, she was successful in many roles—notably those with which she became identified from the operas of Mozart, Verdi and Wagner. Most of these recordings represent the artistry of the noted soprano in her prime, and are exceptionally well recorded for their time. Particularly gratifying to the collector will be the inclusion of the soprano's fine recordings of Amelia's arias from *The Masked Ball* which were withdrawn shortly after their admission to the catalogue in 1933 because, of all things, lack of public interest in this opera. Times have changed for the better. One laments that Rethberg's recordings from *Aida* were omitted here, but it is possible that they may be released later as there is enough recorded material to form another LP of the "art of Elisabeth Rethberg." —P.H.R.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Eugen Onegin*; Mira Vershevich (Larina), Valeria Heybalova (Tatiana), Bislerka Tzveych (Olga), Melanie Bugarinovich (Nurse), Dushan Popovich (Eugen Onegin), Drago Startz (Lenski), Miro Changalovich (Prince Gremin), Chorus and Orchestra of the National Opera, Belgrade, conducted by Oscar Danon. London set XLLA-41, 3 discs, \$14.94.

▲IF the reader owns a copy of William H. Seltsam's *Metropolitan Opera Annals*, he might care to turn to page 348 and note the cast of the first Metropolitan performance of Tchaikovsky's *Eugen Onegin* (March 24, 1920) which had Muzio, Martinelli, De Luca and Didur as the main participants. The writer attended that performance and then and there became an admirer of the opera, despite Huneker's criticism in the *New York World* dismissing the work as "weak, pretty, inconsequential". To be sure, it deals with a type of sentiment that is decadent, and suffers from the self-doubt and self-torment of its characters. But this was something that Tchaikovsky well understood, as Ernest Newman contends: "In *Eugene Onegin* we get the best of him as a musical dramatist, because each of the main characters is to a great extent himself. They are all, in this way or that, defeatists; and for defeatism and frustration Tchaikovsky could always find convincing musical expression."

While some of the characters in *Eugen Onegin* are upper-class provincials, others are noblemen. The social veneer essential to such characters belongs to a world apart from present-day Russia and its satellites; hence their operatic participants of today miss the elegance and essential refinement that Tchaikovsky delineated in his music. To be sure, this performance is better than an earlier one made in Russia (derived from 78-rpm discs), yet few of these singers—despite recognized vocal attributes for these times—have the essential distinction to make their performances truly outstanding. Drago Startz as Lenski comes closest to the desired level. Heybalova, as Tatiana, is no Muzio, nor is she a Nina Koshetz, whom I recall as the finest Tatiana I ever heard. However, Heybalova brings feeling to her characterization and vocally is heard to better advantage than she was in Borodin's *Prince Igor*. Popovich's Onegin is efficient but he does not meet the demands of my envisioned Onegin. However, this company of operatic artists has an all-around competence that makes their presentation of this opera at least enjoyable. The recording is not without flaws in technical balance, but on the whole it is richly realistic. —P.H.R.

WAGNER: *Der fliegende Hollaender*; Astrid Varnay (Senta); Elisabeth Schaertel (Mary); Rudolf Lustig (Erich);

Josef Traxel (Steuermann); Hermann Uhde (Hollaender); Ludwig Weber (Daland); Bayreuth Festival Chorus and Orchestra, conducted by Joseph Keilberth. London set XLLA-42, 3 discs, \$14.94.

▲THIS actual performance recording from Bayreuth includes the introductory fanfares, orchestral tuning and audience noises. A comparison of the opening of the overture is enough to show the essential differences between this and the Decca set led by Fricsay. Fricsay is incomparably the more vital conductor. Keilberth somehow never gets off the ground, which is much more of a pity in view of the general quality of his singers. The first act starts well enough, though Weber's voice shows some signs of his years and his honorably long career. He is an artist, and he knows the style. The Steersman, Josef Traxel, stands out in the cast with his pleasing, light-textured tenor. Uhde's Dutchman has a more striking note of despair in his voice than Metternich in the Decca set, if not all the drama that Hotter brought to the part. For the rest not much can be said. The *Spinning Chorus* is heavy and awkward, leading into a not too prepossessing *Ballade* sung by Varnay. Her voice sounds worn and tired, lacking in ease. Schaertel, as Mary, also is notably unsteady. Lustig, the Erich, is the peasant type; there is neither lyric beauty nor subtle characterization in his singing. The first duet with Senta is extremely uncomfortable. The best feature of the set, perhaps, is the choral work in the last act. There are some strange breaks between sides—in the middle of the *Ballade*, again in the middle of Daland's aria—and for some unfathomable reason the music is continuous from start to finish, with never an intermission.—P.L.M.

STRANGE MUSICI

Panorama of Musique Concète: *Trifle in C* (Henry and Schaeffer); *Fleeting Percussion* (Henry); *Mexican Flute*; *Study for Piano* (Schaeffer); *Finale* from the *Concerto of Ambiguities*; two movements from *Music Without a Title* (Henry); *Study for Whirligigs* (Schaeffer); *The Veil of Orpheus* (Henry); *Railway Study*; *Pathetic Study*; *A Single Sound Source* (Schaeffer); *Musical Box* (Arthuys). London/Ducretet-Thomson DTL-93090, \$4.98.

▲THE big question here is, is this really music—and if not, what is it? We prefer to call it an organization of sound effects into a specific musical, or at least psychological form. It differs from purely electronic music in that the sound sources are natural, (though not always musical), rather than synthetic. But these sources are unusually juggled beyond recognition

by such means as varying speeds, cutting off fundamentals or harmonics, or by any other electronic methods that may come to the composer's mind. Crazy as this may sound, it does make fascinating, if not musically edifying, listening. The most successful attempts, in my opinion, are those in which the composer has intended to evoke emotion rather than merely to amaze. The *Study for Piano*, with its pulsating rhythms and effects of distance, is quite dramatic indeed. The *Veil of Orpheus* is, I think, the finest dramatic attempt on this disc. It combines rich and powerful chordal effects with Greek declamation at various pitch and dynamic levels. The other selections are mere curiosities and have little interest beyond the intellectual ones of rhythm and pure sound. All in all, a fascinating experiment, but I sincerely hope that the future of music does not lie, as predicted, in this medium!

—D.H.M.

ANNIVERSARY SOUVENIR

Geraldine Farrar Commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of Her Metropolitan Opera Debut, November 26, 1906: Introductory remarks; *Romeo et Juliette*—*Valse*; *Faust*—*Jewel Song* (Gounod); *Der Roland von Berlin*—*Fahr wohl! Trautgesell!* (Leoncavallo); *Mefistofele*—*L'altra notte* (Boito); *Faust*—*Love duet* (Gounod) (with Joern); *Rigoletto*—*Eil sol dell'anima* (Verdi) (with Joern); *Tannhaeuser*—*Gepriesen sei die Stunde* (Wagner) (with Joern); *Le Domino noir*—*Aragonaise* (Auber); *Traviata*—*Follie! follie!* (Verdi); Geraldine Farrar (soprano). IRCC L-7010, 10" disc (International Record Collectors Club, 318 Reservoir Ave., Bridgeport 6, Conn. \$4, plus postage, .50—.75 west of the Mississippi)

IT was in Berlin in 1901 that Geraldine Farrar made her debut; these recordings were made there before her coming to the Metropolitan in 1906. They show a very different Farrar from the singer we know by her numerous later discs. To signalize the occasion, she herself speaks the prologue, taking as her text a passage from Longfellow on the subject of youth. The dubbings are modest in volume but sweet, clean and natural in tone. When the records were made the voice was young and vital, with exciting high tones squarely on the note and an ingratiating quality in the lower registers that lingers in the memory.

The *Romeo* waltz is sung in French; thus it is a kind of preview of her Met debut in that opera. No wonder the New York public took her to its heart! The *Faust* is in German, but a softer German—and less distinct—than we usually hear.

The *Roland* piece, from an opera she never sang, suits her voice beautifully. The final sob suggests the dramatic singer of later years. The *Mefistofele* is especially fine, with lovely tone quality and convincing bravura. Of the three duets with Joern, the first is the most successful; the tenor was obviously not at home in the Italian language used in the *Rigoletto*, and in the *Tannhaeuser* he dominates a little

discs—here they've put an unpleasant edge on her tones.

Another operatic set offered on Camden discs is the 1933, Italian recorded performance of Verdi's *Otello* with Nicola Fusati (Othello), Apollo Granforte (Iago), and Maria Carbone (Desdemona) (Camden set CCL-101, 3 discs). Fusati belongs to the "steam-calliope" type of Italian tenors whom one expects would blow a valve with just a little more pressure on his high tones. Some call this type of singer a "trumpet" tenor, likening his upper tones to the clarion quality of the instrument. One feels that Fusati must have been beyond his prime when he essayed this role for a recording. The best singer is Granforte, whose Iago was long admired in Italy. Maria Cabone is a reliable rather than distinguished Desdemona. The balance of the cast and the experienced La Scala Chorus and Orchestra are all competent participants under the knowing direction of Carlo Sabajno.

There are many who remember the conductor Willem Mengelberg with some affection. He was a notable figure in the orchestral world in his day. As most know, Richard Strauss dedicated his *Ein Heldenleben* to Mengelberg, who in 1929 recorded it with the New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra. This was the period in which the dynamic range of the orchestra was limited and no diminuendo or crescendo could be accomplished in reproduction. Historically the old Victor set, now dubbed on one Camden LP (CAL 337), may have its interest—Mengelberg's interpretative temperateness is far more laudatory here than his later intemperance—but truth to say the sound is unpleasant to one who values contemporary reproduction. The low strings actually growl and some curious tonal distortion is prevalent in the recording. If those in charge of Camden records plan to dig deep, they will do well to stay with the famous Victor vocalists. There's still several hundred potential LP gold mines in that field.

More welcome is the Camden re-release of the Sanroma-Fiedler-Boston Pops performances of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and *Concerto in F* (Camden disc CAL-304). Here are two performances, widely praised in their day (1937 and 1940), which still command respect for artistry as well as sound.



Geraldine Farrar as
Elisabeth in *Tannhaeuser*
(Berlin—1905)

too much. The *Domino noir* is a display piece pure and simple, but the *Sempre libera* is one of the most exciting ever made.

—P.L.M.

OTHER REISSUES

AMONG recent Camden reissues, RCA Victor has dug up the 1929 set of Bizet's *Carmen* (recorded in France) with Lucy Perelli (Carmen), Jose de Trevi (Don José), Louis Musy (Escamillo) and Yvonne Brothier (Micaëla) (Camden set CCL-100, 3 discs). While Victor accomplished some fine operatic recording in the late 1920s, the quality of reproduction from La Voix son Maître in France was not comparable. Here, the orchestral sound is muddy and unsatisfactory. Lucy Perelli was an admired Carmen in the 1920s but not a very subtle one. Those who heard her in person say her acting made up for her lack of subtlety as a singer. The Belgian tenor de Trevi is not much of a Don José with his vocal inequalities and Louis Musy, still going strong at the Opéra Comique, is a praiseworthy Escamillo. Brothier, a typical French lyric soprano, sounded better on the old 78

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The American Record Guide
P. O. Bldg. Pelham, N. Y.

Notes and Reviews

THREE IS IN SOULS *a sympathy with sounds, and as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased with melting airs or martial, brisk or grave; some chord in unison with what we hear is touched within us, and the heart replies.*

—William Cowper

BACH: *Clavier Concerto No. 1 in D minor*; **PROKOFIEV:** *Violin Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 63*; Sviatoslav Richter (piano), Leonid Kogan (violin), both with the State Orchestra of the U.S.S.R. conducted by Kurt Sanderling and Kiril Kondrashin respectively. Monitor MC-2002, \$3.98.

▲ THESE recordings are derived from tapes of Soviet origin. At best (in the Prokofiev) the sonics are not exceptional; otherwise (in the Bach), any attempt at an objective evaluation is obviated. What can be discerned of Kogan's performance confirms earlier impressions of a mature artist of the first rank, possessing a silken tone, and stylistically on a par with the best. The single dynamic level throughout the Bach, and the lack of any semblance of balance between the gravelly orchestra and the clangy piano, precludes any fair judgment of the artists involved. —A.K.

BACH: *Violin Concerto No. 1 in A minor*; **Mozart:** *Violin Concerto No. 5 in A, K. 219 ("Turkish")*; Nathan Milstein (violin) with the "Festival Orchestra" conducted by Harry Blech. Capitol P-8362, \$3.98.

▲ MILSTEIN adds two superlative readings to his impressive list of concerto recordings. These were made in the Abbey Road studios of E.M.I. and boast the wonderful spacious acoustics of those famous halls. Milstein has splendid support from Harry Blech and the accompanying orchestra. His Mozart has poise and elegance with plenty of bite and force, while his Bach is reserved with proper rhythmic feeling and coloration. Although there are numerous versions of these works currently available, these belong at the top of the list. The sound is first-rate throughout. Incidentally, Milstein uses his own cadenzas in the Mozart concerto. —R.R.

BACH: *4 Toccatas; 4 Fantasias*; Agi Jambor (piano). Capitol set PBR-8354, \$7.96.

▲ BEFORE attempting any appraisal of the performances at hand, there arises the more basic and perennial question of

adaptability of Bach's music to the piano. These works were written for the harpsichord, and with not only the percussive method of tone production in mind, but also the color potential inherent in varying stops and registers and octave couplings. If the piano is to approximate the texture of its forerunner, the player must have a sure control of wrist and finger action (as distinct from that motivated by the fore or full arm) and a highly subtle way with the pedal. Why, then, use the piano? The alternative is to employ a different style. Jambor's approach is frankly Romantic in phrasing as well as in her liberal use of the pedal. She employs extended *fermati* and frequent *rubati*, and her ideas on Bach phrasing are decidedly her own. Perhaps nowhere is this more apparent than in the *Adagio* of the *D minor Toccata*. Whether or not this is Bach is an academic question. I find the esteemed Hungarian's expositions a shade pale in color. All in all, my own sympathies lie with the more conservative views of what is Baroque. —A.K.

BARTOK: *Bagatelle No. 2; Evening in Transylvania; Bear Dance; Rumanian Dance No. 1; Burlesque No. 2; Allegro Barbaro; Old Dance Tunes; Suite, Op. 14; Rondo No. 1; Air; Tambourine; Bagpipes; Staccato; Ostinato*; **D. SCARLATI:** *Four Sonatas*; **LISZT:** *Sursum Corda*; Béla Bartók (piano). Bartók 903, \$5.95.

▲ THESE are reissues and the faults and merits of the former disc repeat themselves here. Of course, the performances are of tremendous historical importance. But many have the idea that the composer knows best how to interpret his own music, which is decidedly untrue. Strauss claimed that Mengelberg conducted his *Heldenleben* better than he himself, and one has only to listen to their respective performances to see that it was not mere modesty that prompted this statement. In short, Bartók was not the best of all possible pianists for his own music. He had fingers that could move, yes, but they often moved to wrong notes. Also, he plays somewhat too fast—another common fault among composer-pianists. The Scarlatti and Liszt performances are

likewise far from definitive, and make strange bedfellows indeed with Bartók's own works. His tone is difficult to judge because the recording is poor even for its age, and the excessive surface noise does not help. The average music lover will probably find more pleasure with Foldes or Sandor.

—D.H.M.

BARTOK: *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*; **STRAVINSKY:** *Song of the Nightingale*; Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam conducted by Eduard van Beinum. Epic LC-3274, \$3.98.

▲ WITH the opera *Le Rossignol*, from which this suite is drawn, Stravinsky conclusively laid to rest any doubts that he is one of the great masters of orchestral coloring. Van Beinum has wonderfully caught the exotic flavor inherent in this score of varying styles in Stravinsky's development. His is not so thickly textured a reading as Ansermet's, yet it is exquisitely alive and vibrant. Less successful is his reading of the Bartók. Although ravishingly played, it lacks the depth and insight into the complex score that we have had from Bernstein or, on records, from Kubelik, Byrns, and others. Bartók's music does not lend itself to understatement. Fine engineering.

—A.K.

BEETHOVEN: *Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor, Op. 37*; Wilhelm Kempff with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Paul van Kempen. Decca DL-9898, \$3.98.

▲ THIS was released previously in an album set with the other four concertos, all rather crowded to the disadvantage of the reproduction. In our estimation, this is one of the finest performances of the *C minor Concerto* on records. It has an aura of healthy vitality that is as much a compliment to the conductor as to the pianist—who says in his notes that as often as he has played the Beethoven concertos, "never have I failed to experience a feeling of elevation and freshness, as complete as if I were playing them for the first time". What gives this performance a conspicuous place in the Beethoven record literature is its quality of sound—a far cry from what we had in that earlier manifestation—in which sufficient reverberation has been added to provide an enlivening character to the solo instrument and a tonal richness to the orchestra. Backhaus and Gilels formerly engaged our attention, but this performance seems just what we have been waiting for. —P.H.R.

BEETHOVEN: *Sonatas No. 30 in E, Op. 109; No. 31 in A flat, Op. 110; No. 32 in C minor, Op. 111*; Friedrich Wuehrer (piano). Vox PL-9900, \$4.98.

▲ MORE late Beethoven. While admitting at once that the last three sonatas

are, as the jacket of this disc asserts, among "the most sublime and intimate compositions of the entire piano literature," still it seems to me that there must be an extraordinarily great demand for sublimity these days to sustain the large number of recordings that have been appearing. Does every collector own at least half a dozen performances of each of the last sonatas? Apart from this consideration, Wuehrer's performances are among the best that have recently appeared, distinguished, one need hardly note, by a careful and intelligent attention to detail. The more energetic movements, like the first of *Op. 111* and the second of *Op. 109*, are played with less speed and excitement than it is usual to bring to them, and the trills at the end of *Op. 109* sound a bit raucous; but the slow movements reveal fine lyrical playing, and the contrapuntal sections are articulated with admirable clarity. As in all the discs where the three sonatas are squeezed in, there is a turnover during *Op. 110*—here just before the entry of the fugue. —E.Z.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67; Overture—The Consecration of the House, Op. 124;* Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Otto Klemperer. Angel 35329, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲KLEMPERER'S interpretation of both these works ranks with the finest on records. The imposing strength and majesty of his performance lifts the spirit of the listener. For undiminished fervor and "cumulative force", this performance of the *C minor* stands shoulder to shoulder with the Toscanini one. When one thinks of the partially paralyzed Klemperer still active at 71, though "his rigid hand can no longer hold the baton", one realizes the dedication of his mental, physical and spiritual powers in the making of music. In the early years of LP, he struggled with pickup orchestras in Vienna to make recordings of his favorite works, but now—at long last—he has access to one of the greatest orchestras in Europe and the results he has achieved prove the genius of the man as a directive force. The engineering of this record matches the music-making. —P.H.R.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 6 in F, Op. 68 ("Pastorale"); Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Eugen Jochum.* Decca DL-9892, \$3.98.

▲DESPITE the fact that the *Pastorale* is Beethoven's one symphony in the lyric style, there is a limit to how far a musical line can be stretched. Eventually one crosses the border into tedium. It is a tribute to the remarkable Berlin Philharmonic that they play with a vivid opulence despite the snail's pace adopted by Jochum. Although the tempi are forbidding, the performance is neverthe-



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less well organized. My own preference still lies with Szell and the New York Philharmonic, with which any other of this work must stand comparison. Beautifully balanced sound. —A.K.

BERWALD: *Symphony in C (Singulière); Symphony in E flat;* Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Igor Markevitch. Decca DL-9853, \$3.98.

▲SWEDEN'S Franz Adolf Berwald (1796-1868) was a forgotten musician until a foundation bearing his name was formed in 1909 for the publication and performance of his music. In the late 1940s, the Swedes organized a record society in his name and issued quite a list of works which were soon pushed off the shelf with the growth of LP. Berwald seems to have been a gifted musician with a sensible approach to his art. Since he evidently admired Schubert, Berlioz and Mendelssohn, he permitted himself to be influenced by them, but not to the extent of outright imitation. Like Schubert and Mendelssohn he had a gift for melody, albeit revolving around a given tonality that seemingly stretches his lines. These symphonies are quite attractive in their own way—a sort of blend of classic and romantic styles—and most pleasingly assimilable. Markevitch performs them with relish and devotion. The recording is realistic if over-reverberant. —P.H.R.

BLOCH: *Poems of the Sea; Sketches in Sepia; Enfantines;* Maro Ajemian (piano). M-G-M E-3445, \$3.98.

▲THE piano music of Bloch is quite tame as modern music goes, but seems to be always interesting and quite refreshing. It consists basically of a very consonant modality which gives it an archaic and almost naive flavor. The piano is so often used by moderns as a percussive instrument that is good to hear Bloch make it sing. Original? Well, not always. Occasionally one hears shades of Debussy, or even Grieg. But Bloch is more interested in making music than in startling an audience. The *Enfantines* are simple enough for a pianist of modest technical resources, and yet they maintain a high level of expressivity. The *Poems* and the *Sketches* are more advanced in difficulty, but are also direct and lyrical. Ajemian realizes these qualities with considerable skill, and the recording, though not all it could be, is more than adequate.

—D.H.M.

BLOCH: *Suite for Viola; Suite Hébraïque, Meditation and Processional;* William Primrose (viola) and David Stimer (piano). Capitol P8355, \$3.98.

▲BLOCH'S *Viola Suite* is one of his finest works and I can think of no one

who performs it more fervently or expressively than Primrose. His playing in the poetic closing pages of the opening movement, as well as elsewhere, are memorable; the artist is one with the composer in spirit and thought. As sensitively as David Stimer plays the piano, one wishes that Primrose had done this music with an orchestra, as Bloch originally intended it, for—as my late friend Paul Rosenfeld once said—the piano version of the suite, “ably as it is executed, adumbrates the colors in place of fully stating them.” This work dates from Bloch’s thirty-ninth year (1919), his *Five Hebrew Pieces* from 1951. These pieces hardly attest their composer’s depth of feeling or vitality in the manner that the suite does. While we know that Bloch has been consciously a Jewish composer, most of his Hebrew compositions apprise one of their purpose, whereas these five pieces seem born of ruminations of various phases of Hebraic thought and religion, with formal purposes that are not too clearly revealed despite the titles of the various movements. Primrose plays them with artistic conviction which is to his credit. Excellent sound throughout.

—P.H.R.

BRAHMS: *Concerto No. 1 in D minor, Op. 15*; Rudolf Firkusny (piano) with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra conducted by William Steinberg. Capitol P-8356, \$3.98.

▲THIS is a smooth and meticulous performance by two artists who seem strangely cool to the romantic lyricism embodied in the work. The opening statement is neither powerful and dramatic nor is it weak and flabby—it is somewhat in between. There are those who will argue that Brahms is basically a classicist, and for them this recording is almost ideal. It lacks rubato, deviation in tempi or, indeed, interpretative extremes of any kind. The dramatic sweep of the Rubinstein-Reiner version is not here, nor the almost passionate lyricism of the recently deleted Solomon-Kubelik disc. But neither is the interpretation without validity. Steinberg and Firkusny obviously are in artistic agreement that the main elements of this work are its form and classical line, and in these respects they are most convincing. If you yearn for something more, you will probably be disappointed. Capitol has done its part with clear, rich sound.

—D.H.M.

BRAHMS: *Concerto No. 2 in B flat, Op. 83*; Alexander Uninsky (piano) and the Hague Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Willem van Otterloo. Epic LC-3303, \$3.98.

▲PLACE this near the top of the list of recordings of this concerto. The performance resembles that of Backhaus-

Schuricht in breadth of tempi, but it seems to have even more sweep and grandeur. One does not get the restless feeling that Otterloo is dragging the music. He is taking just enough time—and no more—to allow himself and his pianist to mould these expansive phrases with grace and power. Besides this Unisky is, at least in this instance, better equipped technically than was Backhaus, and does not hit nearly so many wrong notes. It seems to me that this performance comes closer to the spirit of Brahms’s music than does either the Horowitz-Toscanini or the Rubinstein-Munch, great virtuoso demonstrations though they may be. The Hague Philharmonic does itself proud, too, with full, rich instrumental choirs, and all are recorded with balance and clarity by Epic. —D.H.M.

BRAHMS: *Violin Sonata No. 3 in D minor, Op. 108*; **SCHUMANN:** *Violin Sonata No. 1 in A minor, Op. 105*; Szymon Goldberg and Artur Balsam. Decca DL-9721, \$3.98.

▲LONG, long ago (remember the Goldberg-Kraus recordings?). Szymon Goldberg convinced me that he was born to play chamber music. And Artur Balsam has always been an ideal partner in the making of such music. Goldberg blends poetry with fire in his Brahms and Balsam matches him in temperament. This performance ranks with those of Stern and Zakin (Columbia) and Oistrakh and Yampolsky (Angel). In my estimation, Goldberg is closer to the heart of Brahms in the slow movement than the others. The lyrically sensitive *A minor Sonata* of Schumann is performed with such charm that the annotator’s assertion that “the first movement sounds as a foreboding of helplessness in the face of irreparable disaster” seems dictated by prejudice. Reading Fanny Davies’ survey of this work in *Cobbett’s*, one learns that Joachim and Clara Schumann performed this work in a manner that definitely belied such comments as Egon Kenton makes bold to make on the first and last movements. Both the works have been splendidly recorded with perhaps, at times, a shade too much violin for the good of the piano—an impression that may not prevail with subsequent listenings. —P.H.R.

BRAHMS: *Ein deutsches Requiem, Op. 45*; Elisabeth Gruemmer (soprano); Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone); St. Hedwig’s Cathedral Choir and Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Rudolf Kempe. **MAHLER:** *Kinderlieder*; Fischer-Dieskau and Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Kempe. RCA Victor set LM-6050, 2 discs, \$7.96.

▲THIS German *Requiem* is in most ways a superlative performance, certainly the best all around so far recorded. The dy-

namic range is wide, from the hushed opening of the first movement to its substantial climax; the choral sound is more crisp and clear than in the best earlier recordings. Apparently Kempe sets particular store by the text, for the words are given due weight, and the choral diction is admirable. In the solo passages with chorus this is a bit overdone, for the soloists stand out larger than life—a fault shared with earlier recordings. Fischer-Dieskau makes the most of his parts, singing with good vocal quality and superlative understanding. Gruemmer has taste and style, but her tone is a little tremulous. Kempe’s treatment of the familiar *Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen* is individual; there is a nice flow, real excitement in the working up to *Die loben dich immerdar*: these are not the ethereal, peaceful courts envisioned in the Lehmann recording, or in most others. The final chorus is beautifully broad and exalted. Two points in the mechanically outclassed von Karajan performance remain unsurpassed—the inexorable building up in the “dead march”—*Denn alles Fleisch*—and Schwarzkopf’s lovely singing of the soprano solo. Lehmann’s recording is very nearly as good as this one; on the other hand, I do not find much understanding in Solti’s. The *Kindertotenlieder* are most properly sung by a baritone, and of all the singers practicing today Fischer-Dieskau is certainly the logical choice to do them. He does not disappoint. The performance is warm and expressive without ever overstepping into sentimentality. The beautifully clear orchestral background has an almost chamber music effect. —P.L.M.

BRAHMS: *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Handel, Op. 24*; *Intermezzo in E flat minor, Op. 118, No. 6*; *Rhapsody No. 2 in G minor, Op. 79*; Witold Malcuzynski (piano). Angel 35349, \$4.98 or \$3.98.

▲WHATEVER earlier impression that Malcuzynski has made as a superior stylist is more than confirmed here. Played with abundant virtuosity, and glowing tone, the intricately difficult Handel *Variations and Fugue* take on a grandness all too seldom heard in performance. Sung with simplicity, spaciousness, ample contrasts, and brilliant bravura where necessary, each variation seems to take on a differing coloration and personality of its own. The fugue is given an architecture of grandeur and nobility rarely realized; the somberly lyric *Intermezzo*, a rendition of real conviction. The gorgeous *Rhapsody* sighs without being strident. What impresses most about Malcuzynski’s expositions is that while he plays everything with utmost taste and refinement, the musical and rhythmic design is always clearly defined. Excellent sound. Highly recommended. —A.K.

CHERUBINI: 6 Sonatas for Clavier; Vera Franceschi (piano). Westminster XWN-18276, \$3.98.

▲THE fame of this composer rests primarily on the number of his famous pupils, rather than on his own numerous compositions. His operas are seldom revived, except in Italy or Germany, and his choral works are quite unfamiliar. These six sonatas, composed in 1780 when Cherubini was twenty years old, show little of the force and grandeur of the later works that have been available to record collectors (the D major Symphony and the magnificent C minor Requiem in particular) but they are most interesting examples of keyboard writing of that period. When one remembers the sonatas of Mozart, C. P. E. Bach, Haydn or other composers these seem quite slight, but they make pleasant listening, none the less. The influence of Domenico Scarlatti seems to be here, but in a much tempered and varied form. These are in two movements—an *Allegro* or *Moderato* and a *Rondo* of varied character. They are full of delightful melodies with elaborate arpeggios and passage work of contrasting moods. Miss Franceschi has a slightly dry tone that is ideal for such works. The recording has plenty of resonance and brilliance. Heartily recommended as a charming bit of unfamiliar music of the late 18th century. —R.R.

CHOPIN: Piano Concerto No. 2 in F minor, Op. 21; Etudes, Op. 10, No. 1; Op. 25, No. 3; Ballade No. 2 in F, Op. 38; Mazurkas, Op. 41, No. 4, Op. 30, No. 4; Scherzo No. 4 in E, Op. 54; Vladimir Ashkenazy (piano) and Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Zdzislaw Gorzynski. Angel 35403, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲LET it be said at the outset that not only is this enormously gifted young Russian possessed of a quicksilver adroitness that is rare in any time, but that he wields a poetic spell reminiscent of no one so much as Horowitz at his best. I have not heard such a moving, lyric quality combined with so flawless a technique in any of the young American artists now before us. The thrice-familiar Chopin F minor is given one of the most notable performances ever. One slight dissent, however: the two cuts in the orchestral tutti's of the introduction and the close of the first movement are uncalled for. The Op. 10, No. 1 and the Scherzo are played so flawlessly and with such vivid coloration as to leave one gasping in disbelief. First-rate accompaniment is provided by Gorzynski and the excellent Warsaw Philharmonic. The sonics are not of Angel's best, but this is forgivable under the circumstances. —A.K.

CHOPIN: Etudes, Op. 10 (complete); Impromptus, Nos. 1 and 2; Decca DL-

9890. *Etudes*, Op. 25 (complete); *Impromptu No. 3*; *Fantasy-Impromptu in C sharp minor*, Op. 66; Ruth Slenczynska (piano). Decca DL-9891. \$3.98 each disc.

▲ALTHOUGH one is impressed with Slenczynska's playing in more intimate moments, by and large these are performances of small frame, lacking in dramatic power and sheer weight of sound. Most successful are the readings of the *Etudes*, Op. 10, Nos. 3 and 5, Op. 25, No. 4, and the *Impromptu* No. 1. What I find wanting in most of the others is a realization of the dramatic and dynamic potentials, as well as color values. These are pieces that are much, much more than mere finger exercises or bone-breakers. One wonders why the remaining three etudes "pour la Methode de Moscheles et Fetis" were not included. My copy of the Op. 25 has a rather fluctuating piano sound. —A.K.

CHOPIN: Scherzo, Op. 39; Mazurkas, Op. 33, No. 4, Op. 17, No. 4; Ballade, Op. 47; Impromptu, Op. 29; Nocturne, Op. 37, No. 2; Polonaise, Op. 53; Stanislas Niedzielski (piano). London/Ducretet-Thompson TW-91147, \$4.98.

▲NIEDZIELSKI has a way of phrasing, particularly in the Mazurkas, that suggests Hofmann's approach to Chopin, but his playing lacks the grand sense of projection and line so characteristic of the late and revered Pole. The rhythmic statement of the opening of the Op. 53 Polonaise is pleasing. Less so, however, is the *accelerando* and detached melody line of the E major portion of this great work. Puzzling, indeed, are this pianist's tempi, as in the *sostenuto* section of the Op. 37 Nocturne, and his abandonment of lyric line in *so legato* a work as the Op. 17 Mazurka. Fine piano sound. —A.K.

CORELLI: Concerto Grosso No. 1 in D, Op. 6; **VIVALDI:** Concerto in A for Viola d'amore and strings; Concerto in D minor, Op. 3, No. 11 ("L'Estro Armonico"); I Musici. Angel 35253, \$3.48 or \$4.98.

▲I MUSICI never give a dull performance; their music-making is most efficient and enjoyable. Stylistically, this group of young musicians is not as well informed or seemingly as willing to pursue traditions adhered to by other ensembles—like the Virtuosi de Roma and the Barichet-Reinhardt group. Thus, in the present recital, the omission of the harpsichord in the two Vivaldi works and the use of a piano instead of a harpsichord in the Martini concerto are failures to conform to stylistic precepts. It is rather amusing to read Luigi Pestalozza's notes, which specifically say that Martini's concerto was written for the harpsichord, that "with Father Martini we find our-

selves on the threshold of the work of Muzio Clementi, who introduced the pianoforte into Italy . . ." This concerto is a particularly charming work with elative end movements and a lovely *Largo* suggesting that the old Padre had thoughts beyond his priory. The pianist plays nicely, but a first-rate harpsichordist would have done better. Nevertheless, the concerto—as well as the other works—will repay familiarity. Excellent reproduction throughout. —P.H.R.

DUTILLEUX: Le Loup; **INGHEL-BRECHT:** La Nursery; L'Orchestre du Théâtre des Champs-Elysées conducted by Paul Bonneau and D. E. Inghelbrecht respectively. London/Ducretet-Thompson DTL-93086, \$4.98.

▲BALLETOMANES will want to acquire this first recording of the music for Roland Petit's 1953 production. The argument has to do with a young bride who becomes enamored of a wolf-man. Henri Dutilleux's score is carefully tailored to fit the choreography; it does not stand up very well outside of context. But it is wonderful dance music, full of color and movement, and it is more welcome to the catalogues. (Presumably the continuing interest of Charles Munch will bring us an LP performance of Dutilleux's fine Symphony of 1951 sooner or later.) The peculiarly mis-matched Inghelbrecht piece is nothing but a didactic palliative for youngsters—an introduction to modern harmonies by way of certain traditional French children's songs. Good performances; the master's touch lends a special charm to the less pretentious work. Excellent sound, considering the source. —J.L.

ELGAR: Enigma Variations; **PURCELL-BARBIROLI:** Suite for Strings; Hallé Orchestra conducted by John Barbirolli. Mercury MG-50125, \$3.98.

▲ONCE more we are reminded that the old days were not altogether lacking in delights. Barbirolli had recorded his charming homage to Purcell with the N. Y. Philharmonic back in the thirties, but it has been unavailable ever since the twilight of shellac. Now it is again in the recorded repertory, and it was graceful of Mercury to extend this courtesy to the newly-signed Sir John. Not that the piece does not deserve to be heard on its own merits; it is indeed the most tasteful transcription of Purcelliana extant. The overside reminds us anew that the English concept of *Enigma* is not Toscanini's, and Toscanini's is our criterion for better or worse. But this is, after all, English music, and it behoves us to respect the more intimate, less virtuosic Barbirollian approach. His men play very well, if not with the perfection of ensemble that we tend to take for granted. The reproductive quality is the best, as usual with

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Mercury. Now, then, let us earnestly pray for more adventuresome explorations of the English orchestral literature. —J.L.

FALLA: *Nights in the Gardens of Spain; El Amor Brujo*; Eduardo Del Pueyo (piano); Corinne Vozza (contralto) and the Orchestre des Concerts Lamoureux conducted by Jean Martinon. Epic LC-3305, \$3.98.

▲THE *Amor Brujo* on this release is undoubtedly among the best available. Martinon seems to draw out practically every ounce of color in the score, resulting in a feeling of excitement and almost pagan force, calculated to arouse the gypsy in even the most lethargic listener. Vozza's powerful and solid contralto is in agreement with this conception of the work. Ansermet's version is more subdued and darkly colored: here are two ways of conducting this music, and both seem valid and satisfying to your reviewer. The *Nights* has less of a Debussyan flavor than do many of the competitive performances. Clarity of line and rhythm is maintained, and the music, instead of being dreamy, sparkles and ripples. This idea of the work has a great deal of charm, but if you prefer more of an impressionistic quality try or Soriano Novaes. The orchestra on the present disc is well balanced and responsive, and Epic has used its finest recording techniques. —D.H.M.

FAURE: *Masques et Bergamasques—Suite, Op. 112*; **DUPARC:** *Lenore—Symphonic Poem*; **CHAUSSON:** *Viviane—Symphonic Poem*; Philharmonia Orchestra of Hamburg conducted by Arthur Winograd. Mercury E.3434, \$3.98.

▲THERE is a refreshing pastoral charm to Faure's music written for "heterogeneous entertainment of a Watteau-Verlainian cast" given at the Opéra-Comique in 1920, entitled *Masques et Bergamasques* (derived from a line of Verlaine's poem *Clair de lune*). The suite is made up a lyrically graceful overture and three dance pieces. This is music of poetic elegance and gallantry which Winograd plays winningly. Henri Duparc, the famous song writer, wrote his only published tone poem—*Lenore*—in his twenty-seventh year (1875). It is a work of no great consequence, owing much to Wagner and Franck, the latter—Duparc's teacher. Its programmatic intention, a potential source of interest, has unfortunately been lost through the years. Hearing it, one realizes that its composer had a fine sense of orchestration which might well have served him to greater advantage had not the state of his health made it necessary for him to retire from the musical world at 37. Chausson's *Viviane* also owes much to Wagner and to Franck. An early work, it is nevertheless "already vital in its genuine poetic fancy and its shimmering

orchestral tints," as Edward B. Hill says in his book *Modern French Music*. The performances of these works are worthy for their adherence to sentiment as well as dramatic values, and the recording is realistically realized.

—P.H.R.

FRANCK: *Symphony in D minor*; Bamberg Symphony Orchestra conducted by Fritz Lehmann. Decca DL-9887, \$3.98.

▲ALTHOUGH one had a high respect for Herr Lehmann in choral and certainly in all Baroque matters before his untimely end, it must be asked: why another Franck *D minor*? The reading here is robust, vigorous, and it bespeaks considerable sympathy, but what could possibly be said in this work that hasn't already been by Monteux, Ormandy, Cantelli and the rest? In short, although effectively conceived, finely played, and well reproduced, it is just another recording, although better than most to be sure. —A.K.

HANDEL: *Israel in Egypt*; Elsie Morison (soprano); Monica Sinclair (contralto); Richard Lewis (tenor); Huddersfield Choral Society and Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra; Herbert Nardgett (chorus master) and Ernest Cooper (organ); conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent. Angel set 3550, 2 discs, \$9.96 or \$6.96.

▲SIR Malcolm's performance belongs to the English choral society tradition; it is on a big scale, with the score touched up here and there and cut where the conductor feels it needs cutting. Since Handel did not provide an overture for *Israel in Egypt*, Sargent has supplied a fanfare. His justification for the more or less traditional use of the male chorus in the duet for two basses, *The Lord is a man of war*, is rather amusing: "to avoid the engagement of a second singer for this one number, and for greater effectiveness."

This is the third recording of *Israel*, the second in English. Neither of its predecessors has seemed to me altogether satisfactory for various reasons. Although some effects in the German performance were good, the soloists were substandard. The English version, conducted by Goehr, used two of the same soloists who sing for Sargent; the chorus and orchestra were of a size to approximate the forces for which Handel wrote, and every effort was made to keep the performance authentic. For all that, I found the choral reproduction not of the clearest. Coming back to it now, I am struck by the rightness of Goehr's intentions. Certain details that don't come off in the new recording are striking in the old—such as the line in *But as for His people*—"He led them forth like sheep." Goehr's tempi seem better chosen, and certainly Mr. Lewis gives a more vital account of *The enemy said* at the faster pace. Miss Morison doesn't

quite made the grade in either version; Miss Proctor has a lovely rich contralto voice, but stylistically she is not up to the less steady Marjorie Thomas. Sir Malcolm has cut six numbers from the score. Some of the side breaks are unfortunate; just when a slow introductory chorus gets you ready for the *attaca*, we have to turn the disc.

—P.L.M.

HINDEMITH: *Sonatas Nos. 1 and 3*; Paul Badura-Skoda (piano). Westminster XWN-18200, \$3.98.

▲THE name of Badura-Skoda is usually associated with Schubert and Mozart. Now we are given a taste of what this talented young man can do with the contemporary idiom. Indeed, the same warm tone and meticulous phrasing are evident on this disc, as in most of his previous releases. This is not entirely surprising, however, because these sonatas do not represent a radical departure in style from music of the past, especially that of the eighteenth century. Hindemith admits himself to be a neoclassicist, and is considered by many to be the leader of that particular school of contemporary writing. The harmony consists of a plaintive, almost dry modality, but the forms are familiar ones; especially the Bach-like fugue which ends the Third Sonata. Therefore Badura-Skoda, with his classical-romantic training, is far from being a fish out of water in these pieces. It might be that he reads a bit more romanticism into them than the composer intended, but the writer, for one, prefers it that way. So many Hindemith performances are merely rhetorical, and of interest only to the most cold-blooded analysts. Not so here, however: these are rich and rewarding musical experiences. Westminster's sound is beautifully complementary to Badura-Skoda's sensitively shaded tone.

—D.H.M.

LALANDE: *Sinfonies pour les soupers du Roy*; **RAMEAU:** *Musique de ballet—Les Paladins—Suites Nos. 1 and 2*; Orchestre de Chambre des Concerts Lamoureux conducted by Pierre Colombo. London Oiseau-Lyre OL-50106, \$4.98.

▲THESE Lalande symphonies are not the same ones heard on London International TWV-91092 (see Nov. issue), but another group previously edited and recorded in part by Roger Désormière. These are truly delightful pieces, written originally for the diversion of King Louis XIV. Colombo, who had access to Désormière's 78-rpm discs, gives us comparably spirited performances which are more tidily contrived than those of the equally delightful ballet music of Rameau, where the recorded quality, also, is less efficacious. All the same, one recommends this disc.

—P.H.R.

LAMBERT: *Concerto for Solo Piano and Nine Instruments*; Gordon Watson and the Argo Chamber Ensemble conducted by Charles Groves; *Eight Poems by Li-Po*; Alexander Young (tenor) with the Argo Chamber ensemble. Westminster XWN-18254, \$3.98.

▲WE HAVE already been blessed with a first-rate performance and recording of Lambert's *Piano Concerto* (MGM-3081), which is coupled with some satirical piano pieces by Lord Berners of ephemeral interest. Lambert's concerto remains diverting; only after several hearings is one aware of the keen irony of its experimental intentions. This uncompromising work was written in December of 1931, not long after the composer's popular *Rio Grande*. In it, says Hubert Foss, Lambert "was making experiments in rhythms, mathematical patterns of a kind to make the dance-boys jealous, if they bothered even to look at them." The rhythmic vitality of this music conceals the intellectuality of the composer. The *Eight Poems of Li-Po* reveal the poetic poise of Lambert's mental processes and his ability to identify himself with a far-off scene. Each of the songs presents a mood that is artfully conveyed in the music without obvious use of oriental devices. Mr. Young sings them expressively, with enunciative perfection, and the concerto also is well played. The reproduction is satisfactory though the piano in the concerto is not as prominently featured as it is in the MGM disc. But then, maybe this was the manner in which Lambert wished it to be heard. —P.H.R.

LISZT: *Canzonetta del Salvator Rosa, Sonetto 123 del Petrarca, Au bord d'une source, Chapelle de Guillaume Tell* (all from *Années de pèlerinage*); **CHOPIN:** *Scherzo No. 3 in C sharp minor, Op. 39*; **SCHUMANN:** *Papillons, Op. 2*; Karl Ulrich Schnabel (piano). Urania UR-8001, \$3.98.

▲THE London *Observer* has characterized Karl Ulrich Schnabel as "one of those rare pianists who listen intently to every note they play". This quality of scrupulous attention to every detail, and the most deliberate working-out of every phrase, comes across vividly on this disc. One admires Schnabel's ability to achieve exactly and invariably the effect he intends, and the great variety of tone colors (perfectly reproduced in a fine recording) he creates in the course of each piece. But it is this same deliberateness that renders his performances not quite satisfying. What the *Papillons*, the *Sonetto del Petrarca*, the *Scherzo* demand most of all is an impression of spontaneity, sometimes even an improvisatory character. And for this reviewer, at least, perfectly executed and interesting as they are, these performances seldom take wing. Side B,

incidentally, is mislabelled on both the sleeve and the disc; as recorded, the Schumann precedes the Chopin. —E.Z.

MARTIN: *Sacred Mass for the Kings of France*; **LOTTI:** *Crucifixus* (6 voices); Jean Giraudeau (tenor); Marie-Claire Alain, Marie-Louise Girod (organ); Mm. Haneux, Bastard, Pirot (Trumpets); Les Chanteurs de Saint-Eustache conducted by R. P. Emile Martin. Concord 4001, \$3.98.

▲THIS *Coronation Mass* is one of the great modern musical hoaxes. It was first performed in 1950 under the direction of the Reverend Father Martin, who announced it as a rediscovered work of the long-forgotten Emile Moulinié. As it happens, the *Mass* is a good piece of music, and the story was credible enough until Martin's musically inclined colleague, Felix Raigel, began to ask questions. We are not told whether this is the first performance preserved for us, but I am inclined to suspect that it is. Apparently it was recorded in a church, for there is a generous amount of echo and diffusion. The sound of the chorus is a little crude, but the brasses are splendidly sonorous, and everything seems very right.

The Lotti *Crucifixus* which serves as a filler is not to be confused with the famous 8-voice setting by the same composer. This is a fine work, if not quite the masterpiece we know the other to be. —P.L.M.

MILHAUD: *Suite Provencale; Saudades do Brasil*; Concert Arts Orchestra conducted by Darius Milhaud. Capitol P8358, \$3.98.

▲MILHAUD'S *Suite Provencale* is derived from a ballet that he wrote in 1936. Using folk tunes and themes by the 17th-century composer André Campra, who was born in Provence, Milhaud devised some charming music. His *Saudades do Brasil* were written for piano in 1920-21 after a visit to Brazil. Later, Milhaud orchestrated the 12 pieces and added an overture. Based on Brazilian folk dance patterns, the thematic material of these ingeniously devised rhythmical studies are always entertaining when performed by an understanding pianist, but it will hardly be denied that they gain considerably with the instrumental coloration of an orchestra, and we can assume that they are played here as he desires us to hear them. Incidentally, his apologetic note, printed on the envelope, seems unnecessary. Splendid sound. —J.N.

MONTEVERDI: *Zefiro torna; Si ch'io vorrei morire; Chiome d'oro; Ohime; Io mi son giouinetta; Amor—Lamento della ninfa; Interrotte speranze; Amor che deggio far; Sestina—Lagrime d'Amante al Sepolcro dell'Amata*; New York Pro Musica Antiqua conducted

by Noah Greenberg. Columbia ML-5159, \$3.98.

▲THE latest release by the New York Pro Musica Antiqua is by all odds its finest to date. All too few recordings of Monteverdi's madrigals are currently available, so the present collection should help fill the gap. It is true that we have Paul Hindemith's marvelous reading of the sestina *Lagrime d'Amante al Sepolcro dell'Amata*, but that is sung by a chorus, while the present group has a more intimate and intense feeling, since it is much smaller. The madrigals on the reverse side come from the fourth, seventh, eighth and ninth books, published from 1603 to 1651. They vary in styles and moods and make stimulating listening. The instrumental accompaniments consist of violin, viola da gamba, recorder and harpsichord. Some madrigals are sung a cappella. Russell Oberlin and Charles Bressler sing the wonderful *Zefiro torna*, *Chiome d'oro* and *Interrotte speranze*. The first is one of the most popular of all Monteverdi's works, and has not been available for some time. This version challenges the previously unsurpassed version in the old Boulanger set on 78's. Here we have the harpsichord, however, and not the intrusive piano of the older performance. Betty Wilson sings *Amor—Lamento della ninfa* with tonal purity and style. The voices blend beautifully in the other selections, and the result is one of the most outstanding releases in recent months. The recorded sound is excellent, with fine balance. The diction of the singers is splendid, for the words are easily understood. The complete Italian texts and English translations are included.

—R.R.

MOZART: *Concerto in E flat for Two Pianos, K. 365; Concerto No. 12 in A, K. 414*; Robert Casadesus, with Gaby Casadesus in K. 365, and Columbia Symphony Orchestra conducted by George Szell. Columbia ML-5151, \$3.98.

MOZART: *Concerto for Two Pianos, K. 365; BACH:* *Concerto in C for Two Pianos*; Clara Haskil and Geza Anda with the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Alceo Galliera. Angel 35380, \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲THE admirably efficient playing of the gifted Casadesus team is backed by the uncompromising competence of conductor Szell in Mozart's two piano concerto. As an admirer of the pianists, the writer found himself completely under their spell until he heard the less formalized Haskil-Anda-Galliera performance with its free spirit and sparkle. Both performances are deserving of respect. Choice might well be governed by the couplings, which in the case of Casadesus is greatly in his favor, for his performance of K. 414 is wholly admirable even if Szell

does not achieve the sparkle that Monteux does for Lili Kraus—a performance that previously was unchallenged. The playing of the Bach work is quite delightful, though the lack of relieving coloration in the sound of the pianos is apt to make it difficult for sustaining interest. Sound-wise both discs are excellent. —P.H.R.

MOZART: *Eine kleine Nachtmusik*, K. 525; *Symphony in C*, K. 425 ("Linz"); London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Antal Dorati. Mercury MG-50121, \$3.98.

▲PLAYED with a thickly-textured sound, these carefully detailed performances nevertheless are given surprising definition. Although they haven't quite the elegance and charm infused in these scores by Walter or Beecham, they have style and a vigorous, youthful quality that make these expositions quite appealing. I would call them the equal or better of any of the readings now on discs—save only those of the two elder masters. The orchestra plays with a clean firmness and beauty of tone. —A.K.

MOZART: *Sonata in B flat*, K. 454; *Sonata in A*, K. 526; Arthur Grumiaux (violin) and Clara Haskil (piano). Epic LC-3299, \$3.98.

▲THE circumstances of Mozart's life at the time he wrote these two sonatas make an interesting contrast. The first and less mature work was written in 1784, when Mozart was at the height of his popularity in Vienna. Throughout this year he was giving concerts and playing at the private soirees of Eszterházy and Gallizin. For these programs he composed heavily, which is the reason for the predominance of piano or piano-and-violin music in the Koehel catalogue of this period. But by 1787 Mozart's fortunes had taken a downward turn. His *Nozze di Figaro* had been produced, and except in Prague had been pretty much of a failure. In April of 1787, in a letter to his dying father, Mozart first speaks of death as "the truest and best friend of mankind". Leopold's passing soon thereafter, and also the composer's constant, gnawing poverty are reflected in the depth of the great *A major Sonata* here recorded. Both artists play with rare insight and gratifying virtuosity. The ethereal *Andante* of the later sonata is particularly spell-binding. The K. 454 of earlier, happier days is given no less knowing an exposition. First-rate sound. —A.K.

MOZART: *Symphony No. 41 in C*, H. 551 ("Jupiter"); Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of London conducted by Erich Leinsdorf. Westminster W-LAB 7022, \$7.50.

▲THIS is a strong performance of the "Jupiter", uncompromising in its vigor

and superbly controlled. This is a far different interpretation than the Viennese one of Bruno Walter (Columbia ML-5014), more insistently dramatic, with little of the latter's poetic sentiment. Walter moves us more in the agitated passion of the *Andante* but elsewhere Leinsdorf makes us more aware of the strength, the majesty and splendor of this work—which may or may not be for the good in repetition. No listener will be able to relax to this type of performance, something which far too many people expect to do with music of this kind. The reproduction, like the majority of Westminster's Laboratory releases, is exceptionally impressive in its clarity and freedom of distortion. —P.H.R.

PROKOFIEV: *Piano Concerto No. 3 in C*, Op. 26; Emil Gilels (piano); *Violin Concerto No. 1 in D*, Op. 19; David Oistrakh (violin); State Radio Orchestra of the U. S. S. R., conducted by Kiril Kondrashin. Westminster XWN-178, \$3.98.

▲SUPERB performances, well recorded. Both works are of respectable age (the violin concerto was completed in 1917, the piano concerto in 1921) and by now they are standard repertory, their "cacophony" seeming more academic than daring. Yet they are full of interest, with passages of great beauty and great wit, all perfectly articulated by Gilels and Oistrakh. The richness of the latter's tone is always remarkable. Although the virtuoso mastery of the solo artist is in evidence throughout both works, this is never at the expense of relegating the orchestra to a subordinate position, and Kondrashin's conception of the music seems to be in complete accord with that of the soloists. —E.Z. [There are four versions of the *Violin Concerto* by Oistrakh, the best of which are Angel's and this Westminster one. —Ed.]

PURCELL: *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* (1612) (ed. Tippett and Bergmann); Alfred Deller (counter-tenor); April Cantelo (soprano); Wilfred Brown (tenor); Maurice Bevan (baritone); Peter Salmon (counter-tenor); John Frost (basso); George Eskdale (trumpet); Ambrosian Singers and Kalmer Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Michael Tippett. Bach Guild BG-559, \$4.98.

▲IN Tippett and Bergmann's practical edition the *Ode* is grand and impressive, which seems gloriously in keeping with the happy occasion. Tippett's performance, too, is telling, enlisting the services of several of England's most accomplished musicians. Deller and Salmon carry off the duet passages for two counter-tenors in fine style. I was rather less impressed with Miss Cantelo, whose singing is somewhat tremulous, but this is a detail. At

the beginning of the second side the instruments seemed a little over-recorded, for their tone was not quite as clean and sharp as we might wish. Otherwise the disc is a credit to all concerned. —P.L.M.

RAVEL: *Trio in A minor*; **FAURE:** *Trio in D minor*, Op. 129; The Beaux-Arts Trio (Menahem Pressler—piano, Daniel Guillet—violin, Bernard Greenhouse—cello). MGM E-3455, \$3.98.

▲THIS seems to be a newly formed ensemble which, one hopes, will go beyond just preparation for recorded performances by playing far and wide in concert halls. Each of the players is a ranking solo performer in his own right. They deserve success. In their first record, the performance of the lovely Fauré *Trio* with its "mezzo-tinted" classicism rather than in the more boldly colorful and sophisticated elegance of the Ravel work that the group is most successful. If one did not know the Heifetz-Piatigorsky-Rubinstein version of the Ravel with its rich timbres (particularly from the Rubinstein piano), one would be less critical of this performance, but Pressler does not achieve the essential coloration for his part in this work. Those who value Fauré as highly as the writer does will definitely want this disc, and who is to say that they will not be equally satisfied with, or even prefer to other versions, the Ravel? —P.H.R.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: *Scheherazade*, Op. 35; Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam conducted by Eduard van Beinum. Epic LC-3300, \$3.98.

▲SOMETIMES a cover can stop you from listening to a performance—so I'm told by dealers. Two looks at the cover on this disc and I was willing to pass it up—it's a completely trumped-up phoney and the hapless model for Scheherazade has been made to register a dumb-Dora look not in keeping with the Sultan's favorite. Well—I turned the cover over and explored the contents of the envelope, and I'm mighty glad I did. For van Beinum gives us as fine a performance of this ever-ubiquitous Rimsky work as we have had to date, with some lovely violin playing by Jan Damen. The strings of the Concertgebouw Orchestra are really something to hear in this wonderfully realistic recording, and van Beinum's performance of this music is never over-dramatized. In this respect he is akin to Ansermet, who has also served Rimsky faithfully and well. If it is extra excitement you want—and it is there to exploit in the score—you might try Stokowski's version. —J.N.

SARASATE: *Carmen Fantasy*; **SAINT-SAENS:** *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso*, Op. 28; **VIEUXTEMPS:** *Violin Concerto No. 5 in A minor*, Op. 37; Leonid Kogan (violin) with the State

Radio Orchestra of the USSR conducted, respectively by Vassili Nebolsin, Alexander Gauk, and Kiril Kondrashin. Westminster XWN-18228, \$3.98.

LEONARD KOGAN plays Violin Encores: *Sevilla, El Puerto* (Albéniz-Heifetz); *Grand Adagio* from *Raymonda Ballet* (Glazounov-Zimbalist); *Waltz* from *Raymonda* (Glazounov-Pogozhev); *Theme and Variation* (Paganini-Kreisler); *Capriccio Basque*, Op. 24 (Sarasate); *Polonaise*, Op. 21 (Wieniawski); *Introduction and Variation on a Theme by Rossini* (Paganini). Piano accompaniments by Andrei Mitnik and Arnold Kaplan. Westminster XWN-18229, \$3.98.

▲**LEONID KOGAN** is definitely a violinist of distinction. Inherently a musician of sensitivity and sensibility, he is none the less a gifted technician who leaves us less conscious of his technical prowess than that wonderful, violinistic machine David Oistrakh. Kogan also shows a greater insight, in my estimation, into style than we usually hear from Soviet musicians. Moreover, he has an appreciation of elegance and also the art of nuance. This is made apparent at once in his performances of the Saint-Saëns' work and the Vieuxtemps concerto. Even his encore recital sustains our interest for the avoidance of "horse-play", the usual show-off tactics that the best of violinists are apt to indulge in when they play short pieces. I can imagine others indulging in obvious showmanship in the Paganini piece where Kogan reveals his discretion in music of this kind. Both recitals are splendidly reproduced, with fine balance between the soloist and his cooperative cohorts. —P.H.R.

SCHUBERT: *Sonatas in A minor, Op. 42, and C (1815)*; Friedrich Wuehrer (piano). Vox PL-9620, \$4.98.

▲THIS is the seventh disc in the set of all the Schubert sonatas Wuehrer is recording for Vox. Here one of the greatest, longest and most popular sonatas is coupled with an unfinished and virtually unknown (but not uninteresting) early attempt in the form. As has been noted in previous reviews, Wuehrer's careful balance of strict tempi and lyrical expressiveness is very well suited to Schubert's piano music, and this disc maintains the high standard already established. Good piano sound. —E.Z.

SCHUBERT: *Sonata in C minor, Op. Posth.; Moments musicaux, Op. 94*; Leonard Shure (piano). Epic LC-3289, \$3.98.

▲IN SPITE of Mr. Shure's spirited performance, I am still not convinced that the C minor sonata is among the greatest or even the most interesting examples of Schubert's piano music. The *Moments musicaux* are, of course, another matter, and since Mr. Shure plays them with simplicity and charm, that side of the disc ought to please almost everybody. Good sound. —E.Z.

SCHUBERT: *Octet*, Op. 166; David Oistrakh and Peter Bondarenko (violins), Mikhail Terian (viola), Sviatoslav Knushevitzky (cello), Joseph Gertovich (Double Bass), Vladimir Sorokin (clarinet), Joseph Stidel (bassoon), Jacob Shapiro (French horn). Angel 35372. *Symphony No. 2, Op. 61; Overture, Scherzo and Finale*, Op. 52. Angel 35373. *Symphony No. 3, Op. 97 ("Rhenish")*; *Manfred Overture*, Op. 115. Angel 35374. Israel Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Paul Kletzki. Each disc \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲EIGHT Russian virtuosi are heard in a performance of Schubert's *Octet* that bears no resemblance to any heard previously on records. The first violin part of Oistrakh is too prominent and the wind instruments are tonally ineffective. The seams in the fabric are not always smoothly joined and no one is near to the heart or spirit of Schubert. The Vienna Octet (London LL-1049) are preferred in this music, not alone because physically the players are closer to home base but because their hearts are with Schubert. —P.H.R.

SCHUBERT: *Symphony No. 5 in B flat; Rosamunde, Op. 26—Overture, Ballet Music No. 2, Entr'acte Music No. 3*; Columbia Symphony Orchestra conducted by Bruno Walter. Columbia ML-5156, \$3.98.

▲SURPRISINGLY, Bruno Walter's readings of these Schubert selections are not all that was to be expected from this great conductor. The Symphony seems a bit heavy and lethargic, especially in the wonderful opening movement. The pacing is a bit on the slow side, but that does not seem to be the basic flaw in the performance. The attacks are stodgy and there is little gaiety and bounce. The same holds true in the *Rosamunde Overture* on the reverse side. Things change, however, in the *Ballet* and *Entr'acte* music. Here we have the old Walter magic at work, and the spell of the music holds the listener. The sound is resonant and spacious throughout. —R.R.

SCHUBERT: *Symphony No. 8 in B minor ("Unfinished")*; **MOZART:** *Symphony in D, K. 385 ("Haffner")*; Vienna Symphony Orchestra conducted by Carl Schuricht. London LL-1534, \$3.98.

▲THIS disc is a souvenir of the recent visit of the Vienna Philharmonic and its efficient conductor, Carl Schuricht. These performances are in their way something out of the ordinary, for they are imbued

with the particular attributes of Viennese music-making without any dynamic excesses or musical liberties that are sometimes evidenced. The ubiquitous "Unfinished" is performed with deep affection, notably in the second movement, and Mozart's symphony-serenade is given one of its most competent evaluations on records. Soundwise these performances are especially admirable, to say nothing of the realism. —P.H.R.

SCHUMANN: *Symphony No. 1, Op. 38 ("Spring")*; *Symphony No. 4, Op. 120*; Angel 35372. *Symphony No. 2, Op. 61; Overture, Scherzo and Finale*, Op. 52. Angel 35373. *Symphony No. 3, Op. 97 ("Rhenish")*; *Manfred Overture*, Op. 115. Angel 35374. Israel Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Paul Kletzki. Each disc \$4.98 or \$3.48.

▲SOMEONE ONCE said that you cannot perform Schumann without affection, without keeping the romantic spirit in which the music was conceived always alive in the music. Kletzki's well prepared and splendidly reproduced performances are not strictly traditional interpretations of these works. They are strong, at times almost athletic, performances suggesting a spirited enthusiasm of all concerned (conductor and players) but supplying little of the needed romantic disposition. If, in honor of the hundredth anniversary of Schumann's death, Kletzki decided to reappraise the interpretative values of Schumann's orchestral music, there is just reason to applaud him. However, one should compare his work with that of others who are more traditionally and poetically minded and decide for oneself the merits of each—i.e. Ansermet in the *First Symphony*, Szell or Schuricht in the *Second*, Schuricht in the *Third* and the *Overture, Scherzo and Finale*, Furtwängler in the *Fourth*, and Toscanini in the *Manfred Overture*. —P.H.R.

SHOSTAKOVICH: *Symphony No. 1 in F, Op. 10*; **KABALEVSKY:** "Colas Breugnon" Suite, Op. 24; St. Louis Symphony Orchestra conducted by Vladimir Golschmann. Columbia ML-5152, \$3.98.

▲WITH this album Columbia welcomes to its ranks Golschmann and his St. Louis forces. Fortunately, the choice of repertoire are pieces with which Golschmann has long been identified. The performance of the "Colas Breugnon" Suite is certainly superior to any now available, however one wistfully remembers the Toscanini performance on 78's of the Overture to this merry opera, which was a model for any to come. I was most pleasantly surprised by the sensitivity of exposition in the Shostakovich. Within recent memory, only Rodzinski has had so moving a way with this work. The orchestra plays with a big, exciting, and

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Record Guide

enveloping sound, but there is much reverberation. Columbia's engineers have not achieved perfect balance among the sections in general and between the percussion and strings in particular. —A.K.

SULLIVAN: *The do-it-yourself H.M.S. Pinafore*; Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Louis Shankson. Concord 3001, \$3.98.

▲THE idea, of course, is that you do your own singing to this orchestral accompaniment. A booklet with texts and music comes with the set. This is all for some good innocent fun, and should be appreciated. —P.L.M.

J. STRAUSS: *Graduation Ball*; **MEYERBEER:** *Les Patineurs*; Ballet Theater Orchestra conducted by Joseph Levine. Capitol P-8360, \$3.98.

▲AS arranged by Antal Dorati, who was the first conductor of the then newly organized Ballet Theater, *Graduation Ball* has served that company well as a perennial closing number. *The Patineurs* is a product of the brilliant Frederick Ashton in collaboration with the late Constant Lambert, who chose the music from Meyerbeer's *Prophète* and the almost unknown opera, *L'étoile du nord*. Here we have them both beautifully played (would that the group sounded like this in the pit, and engineered to sound like a full symphony orchestra). Both works convey the charm inherent in their choreography. Without the stage action, however, both tend to wear thin about midway. The reproduction is Capitol's best. —A.K.

STRAUSS: *Till Eulenspiegel's lustige Streiche*, Op. 28; *Tod und Verklärung*, Op. 24; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Fritz Reiner. RCA Victor LM-2077, \$3.98.

▲FRITZ REINER off home bass seems not had to have obtained the same results from the Vienna Philharmonic as he does from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. The recording may be at fault, rather than the orchestra, though it generally remains agreeable to the ear, but it is a fact that the climactic passages in *Till* are lacking in clarity. *Death and Transfiguration* fares better. For this pairing of works, I prefer the Toscanini performances (RCA Victor LM-1891) where clarity of sound prevails throughout. Reiner has always been a fine Straussian, but so too has Toscanini and Bruno Walter and the late Clemens Krauss. If one has satisfactory performances of these works, it is unlikely that one will be wooed and won by this new release. —J.N.

TANSMAN: *Isaiah, the Prophet*; Radio Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra of Hilversum conducted by Paul van Kempen. Epic LC-3298, \$3.98.

▲THE dissonant harmonic style and the tense rhythms (somewhat reminiscent of Stravinsky) adapted by Tansman have evident appropriateness for the Old Testament subject he has chosen. Certain pictorial effects, such as the suggestion of angry waters in the first movement, come off triumphantly. And there is a section in the fourth movement that stands out from the rest because here the tension is relaxed to suit the words—*Ne crains rien*. The performance is powerful in the same way that the music is powerful. Chorus and orchestra have been so placed for recording that the voices do not swamp the instruments; indeed, they sometimes make their entrance before we are quite sure they are singing. All this, I am sure, is right for the music, the only drawback being that the text is thus made obscure. Happily the words are printed on the jacket, so that they can be followed. —P.L.M.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 1 in F minor*, Op. 13 ("Winter Dreams"); Bolshoi Symphony Orchestra conducted by Nicolai Golovanov. Westminster XWN-18224, \$3.98.

▲THIS is an excellent performance of this earliest work by the Russian master in the symphonic form. It is marred only by the poor quality of sound obtained from the Soviet tapes, which misleadingly gives a rather ponderous quality to the orchestra. Conductor Golovanov, now deceased, knew his business well, for the excellent Bolshoi Symphony evidences vitality and exuberance. Particularly rewarding is the playing of the *Adagio cantabile* and the *Scherzo* which follows. Those who know only the last three symphonies of Tchaikovsky really ought to address themselves to the earlier ones, which are undeservedly neglected to say the least. —A.K.

WAGNER: *Fueh Gedichte*; *Lohengrin*—*Einsam in trüben Tagen*; *Parsifal*—*Ich sah das Kind*; *Walkure*—*Der Manne Sippe*; *Du bist der Lenz*; Kirsten Flagstad (soprano) with Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Hans Knappertsbusch. London LL-1533, \$3.98.

▲OF the various great singers who have come to the recording studios in their sixties, Flagstad can surely claim the distinction of retaining more of her past glory than any other. Aside from a few high tones and some difficulty sustaining occasional long ones, one misses little of the great voice we have known so well. Of course this Wagner repertoire is not new to her (only *Der Maenne Sippe* has not figured on her record list before) but on the other hand, though the voice may have been fresher some years ago, it has not always been so well reproduced.

The five Wesendonk *Leider* were composed for voice and piano, and several

years ago Flagstad and Gerald Moore recorded them in England. Here she does them in Mottl's orchestration (only *Träume* was so arranged by Wagner) which seems suitable for such a heroic instrument as the Flagstad voice. Of the dramatic scenes on the reverse the best seems to me her one first recording. In her best days she was rather a majestic Elsa, and she doesn't seem worked up to the proper pitch of excitement for Sieglinde's *Du bist der Lenz*. The tempo of the *Parsifal* scene seems slow, but this is undoubtedly the conductor's responsibility. —J.N.

WEBER: *Clarinet Concerto No. 1 in F minor*, Op. 73; *Bassoon Concerto in F*, Op. 75; Jacques Lancelot (clarinet) and Paul Hongne (bassoon), Oiseau-Lyre Orchestral Ensemble conducted by Louis de Froment. London/Oiseau-Lyre OL-50105, \$4.98.

▲IN ensembles these expert French wind players are heard to better advantage than they are here. Their tonal quality in both cases is not the sort that Weber expected and obtained in Germany, nor the sort with which we are familiar in this country. Moreover, the recording quality is not top drawer. As one English reviewer remarked: "Weber enthusiasts must, I'm afraid, be recommended to patience." It should be pointed out that an earlier release of this and another clarinet concerto also fails to serve Weber advantageously. Come to think of it, except for his overtures and the *Invitation to the Dance*, Weber hasn't been too well handled on records. What gives? —J.N.

OTHER REVIEWS

BACH: *Violin Concerto in E*; **BEETHOVEN:** *Romance in G*; *Romance in F*; Igor Oistrakh (violin) and the Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig conducted by Franz Konwitschny. Decca DL-98/5, \$3.98.

▲IGOR 's not the violinist his father is. But who can expect this of a boy of twenty-five? Besides, he should be judged on his own merits, and not be unfairly compared with the elder Oistrakh, who has lived with music a good deal longer, and has ripened interpretatively as a consequence. We cannot deny that the younger Oistrakh's merits are many. There is a sweetness and purity to his tone which is a joy to hear. His intonation is well nigh perfect, and his technique is of a high order indeed. He may lack the deepest insights at the present time, but he does have blood in his veins. All these elements make his performances here highly satisfying. Unfortunately—or fortunately, depending whose side you are on—Oistrakh pere has recorded this very same concerto; and not on an inferior tape of Russian vintage, either. He did it with Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra, and his disc is superior sonically as well as musically. —D.H.M.

BACH: *Sonatas No. 1 in B minor* (BWV 1030); *No. 2 in E flat* (BWV 1031); *No. 3 in A* (BWV 1032) for Flute and Harpsichord; *Sonata in A minor* (BWV 1013) for Unaccompanied Flute; Jean

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Record Guide

Pierre Rampal (flute) & Robert Veyron-Lacroix (harpsichord). London-Ducréte-Thomson DTL-93107. \$4.98.

▲THE second of two records containing the complete flute sonatas of Bach is an unqualified success. It contains the three sonatas for flute and harpsichord, while the other (DTL-93058, reviewed in September 1956) had the three for flute and continuo. For good measure we have here the "sonata" for solo flute. This last work is cast in the form of a French suite rather than an Italian sonata, for the movements are marked *Allemande*, *Corrente*, *Sarabande* and *Bourree anglaise*. It is played with skill and tonal brilliance by M. Rampal. The other sonatas also are set forth with consummate style and elegance and the sound is excellent throughout, with proper balance between the two instruments. The No. 2 contains the simple yet moving *Siciliano* familiar in Wilhelm Kempff's transcription for piano, played so effectively by Dinu Lipatti. The first movement of the third sonata was left incomplete and published as an appendix in the Bach *Gesellschaft* edition. It is usually omitted in recordings. However, M. Rampal uses the edition by Louis Fleury, which solves the problem by adding four bars to the 62 composed by Bach, making a bridge to the two bars that Bach intended to conclude the movement. This is skillfully done, and indeed, if one did not know of this, one could easily assume that the movement were entirely Bach's. This record, together with the earlier release, make the most complete set of Bach flute sonatas available. The other versions, by Baker and Marlowe and by Wummer and Valenti, are excellent, but the present recording has the edge in completeness and well-balanced sound.

—R.R.

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata No. 30 in E, Op. 109;*
Sonata No. 31 in A flat, Op. 110; Egon Petri (piano). Concord 3002, \$3.98.

▲THERE seems to be some doubt as to whether or not this is a new recording. If the performances are indeed recent, then the seventy-five-year-old Petri has maintained his speed and control to an unusual degree. He is a pianist of the "Grand Manner", and this recording exemplifies that school of playing very well. But I would rather hear him play Chopin Polonoises or Etudes than late Beethoven. The latter is essentially introspective and subtle. Such is the approach of Myra Hess, and the result is a profound musical experience. Such was also the approach of the late Artur Schnabel, who practically owned late Beethoven. His performances, recently re-released by Victor, are models of depth of musical understanding and insight—especially the adagios, which challenge the greatest of today's pianists. Meanwhile, Petri is a superb virtuoso in his own style, not to be overlooked. One nice added touch from Concord: scores of both sonatas included with the record. The sound is quite good.

—D.H.M.

BRAHMS: *Double Concerto in A minor, Op. 102;*
Tragic Overture, Op. 81; David Oistrakh (violin),
Pierre Fournier (cello), and the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Alceo Galliera. Angel 35353, \$4.98 or \$3.98.

▲WHAT seem like the perfect ingredients for a beautifully integrated performance result in a disappointing interpretative totality. Oistrakh plays with the warmth that we have come to expect of him, Fournier with superb musicianship but with an objective coolness. Rarely do the two styles seem to communicate. Conductor Galliera, who should be the unifying influence, appears to stand in awe of his celebrated soloists, for the orchestra is deferent and pale in its accompaniment. One waits for the *tutti* passages to soar, and for the dotted rhythms to take on their familiar bite, but no such motivation seems to emanate from the podium. The playing of the *Tragic Overture*, which fills out the album, represents scant improvement. Good sound.

—A.K.

CHOPIN: *Ballade in A flat, Op. 47;* *Nocturne in D flat, Op. 27 No. 2;* *Impromptu in A flat, Op.*

29; *Tarantelle in A flat, Op. 43;* *Scherzo in B minor, Op. 20;* *Polonaise in F sharp minor, Op. 44;* *Polonaise in A, Op. 40, No. 1;* Philippe Entremont (piano). Epic LC-3316, \$3.98.

▲THERE are many schools of Chopin-playing, and almost all of the major ones are represented on disc. Rubinstein displays great drama and contrast; Jonas is lyrical and somewhat too sweet; Horowitz sometimes combines the best of these two artists, plus an amazing technical wizardry. Entremont may not yet be an artist of their stature; nevertheless, he seems a sensible enough young man with considerable technical and interpretative talents at his command. He is not given to extremes such as roaring, whizzing, or dripping. Therefore, nothing seriously mars his playing—except perhaps a lack of sufficient emotional identification with the music. On this much evidence I am sure that Entremont is a fine pianist, but not convinced that he is an overwhelming artist. This originality of approach and power of projection may come when he has lived with Chopin a bit longer.

—D.H.M.

CHOPIN: *17 Waltzes;* Livia Rev (piano). London-Ducréte-Thomson DTL-93088, \$4.98.

▲THE main interest in this record centers around the fact that it contains three fairly unfamiliar Waltzes, two of which seem to be first recordings. Miss Rev has stiff competition but it must be said in all fairness that she acquires herself quite satisfactorily. Her tone is slightly dry with a limited range. Some pianists evidently like this style of playing, while others prefer the more romantic approach. The Waltz No. 15 in E, like the A flat and E flat (Nos. 16 and 17) are products of the composer's youthful days in Warsaw. These slight pieces have a certain interest from an historical point of view, but they barely foreshadow the wonderful waltzes of the composer's more mature days. The performances do justice to the slighter pieces here. The more familiar ones fare equally well. However, this disc is unlikely to displace the Lipatti version, which should be in every piano collection. The waltzes are not played in chronological order, but rather in an arbitrary arrangement of contrasting moods.

—R.R.

MOZART: *Symphony No. 41 in C, K. 551 ("Jupiter");* HAYDN: *Symphony No. 95 in C minor;* RIAS Symphony Orchestra of Berlin conducted by Ferenc Fricsay. Decca DL-9745, \$3.98.

▲IT is noteworthy that Haydn's C minor Symphony was composed the very year of Mozart's death and burial in an unmarked pauper's grave. For Haydn, it was a sad blow; not only were the two close personal friends, but each had the highest regard for the other's art. (Haydn repeatedly had tried to secure a court appointment for the younger man. Only in Prague, where Mozart had his greatest successes did Haydn succeed in obtaining

a commission for his friend. The result was *Don Giovanni*. Through Haydn's English impresario Salomon, Mozart was invited to London from December, 1790 to June, 1791 to compose two operas for 300 pounds sterling. Why he did not go one does not know.) Of further interest here is the fact that this is the only one of Haydn's later symphonic works for which he did not write a slow introduction. Although both symphonies are played with gratifying orchestral tone and melting lyricism, both are works that are principally non-lyric in nature. Fricsay's rhythms and attacks do not have all the inciseness that the music demands. His performances are therefore somewhat lacking in conviction, at least to these ears. Good sound.

—A.K.

MUSIC OF INDIA: (5 Ragas); Gaurang Yodh (sitar) and Dinesh Patel (tabla). Westminster set XWN-2210, 2 discs, \$7.96.

▲LOOSELY speaking, this is a sort of sonata recital of five extended ragas. This term means, literally, modes, but not quite in the sense that we understand them. To the Indian a mode is "that which charms", and it is therefore a combination of notes comprising, in its unadorned state, a theme that denotes a given mood. What ensues, in effect, is development of this material, the scale in each case being the same 22-interval octave of whole-, half-, and quarter-tones that fascinated us in the earlier Angel issue emceed by violinist Yehudi Menuhin (35283). The latter is recommended to those who want a single disc. But those who already own that recording will not want to miss this more ambitious set, not the least rewarding aspect of which is the superbly succinct annotation by the ethno-musicologist Henry Jacobs. Incidentally, this is not folk music. Call it classical or call it jazz, but it is an endless intellectual fascination.

—J.L.

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